

Amendments To The Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for collecting material, ~~particularly oil~~, floating on the surface of a body of water, comprising

a collection vessel (11) with a collection compartment (A) which comprises

- an upper subcompartment (B) which is delimited laterally by an inner wall (12/13) having a skimming weir (K) forming an inlet to the collection compartment (A),

- a lower subcompartment (C) which is delimited laterally by an outer wall (15), and

- a bottom outlet (14A),

means (19) for discharging water from the collection compartment (A) through the bottom outlet (14A),

the inner wall (12/13) and the outer wall (15) delimiting a separation compartment (D) for the floating material, the separation compartment (D) being in open communication with the upper subcompartment (B) of the collection compartment (A),

characterised by a valve (16/13B) which is provided at the top of the separation compartment (D) and when in an open position connects the separation compartment (D) with the upper subcompartment (B) of the collection compartment (A).

2. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, **characterised** in that the valve (16/13B) extends substantially around the upper subcompartment (B) of the collection compartment (A).

3. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, **characterised** in that the inner wall (12/13 and the outer wall /15) are annular and concentric.

4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 or 3~~ claim 3, **characterised** in that the valve includes an annular valve member (16) which is disposed around the upper subcompartment (B) of the collection compartment and in the closed position of the valve is in sealing engagement with an annular valve seat (13B) on the inner wall.

5. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 3, **characterised** in that the valve seat (13B) is provided on a lower part (13) of the inner wall (12/13) and in that the lower end of an upper part (12) of the inner wall is secured to the valve member and movable together with it.

6. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 5, **characterised** in that the height of the upper part (12) is variable.

7. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 6, **characterised** in that the upper part (12) is formed over at least a portion of its height by an annular bellows (12B).

8. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, **characterised** in that the valve (16/13B) is operable between closed and open positions by the action of a hydrostatic differential pressure across the valve.

9. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 19, **characterised** in that the valve (16/13B) is acted on in the closing direction by water pressure outside the inner wall (12/13).

10. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 4, **characterised** in that the skimming weir (K) is formed by a buoyant body (12A).

11. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 10~~ claim 4, **characterised** by an outlet (25A) which communicates with the upper subcompartment (B) of

the collection compartment (A) and includes a riser tube (26) having a vent opening at its upper end and an overflow outlet (26A) at a level below the vent opening.

12. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 11, **characterised** by a collapsible floating recipient (27) having a mouth (27A) which is detachably connected to the overflow outlet (26A) and a collapsible drain (27C) provided at a bottom side of the recipient remote from the mouth (27A).

13. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 12, **characterised** in that the overflow outlet (26a) is tubular and in that the mouth (27A) of the floating recipient (27) is tubular and slipped over the overflow outlet (26A) and clamped to it by means of a clamping ring connector (28) including an axially displaceable clamping ring (28A) surrounding the overflow outlet (26A) and an annular bead (26C) on the overflow outlet (26A).

Claims 14-18. (Canceled)

Claim 19 (New) Apparatus according to claim 4, **characterised** in that the valve (16/13B) is operable between closed and open positions by the action of a hydrostatic differential pressure across the valve.

Claim 20 (New) Apparatus for collecting oil floating on the surface of a body of water, comprising

a collection vessel (11) with a collection compartment (A) which comprises

- an upper subcompartment (B) which is delimited laterally by an inner wall (12/13) having a skimming weir (K) forming an inlet to the collection compartment (A),

- a lower subcompartment (C) which is delimited laterally by an outer wall (15), and

- a bottom outlet (14A) through which water is capable of being discharged from the collection compartment,

the inner wall (12/13) and the outer wall (15) delimiting a separation compartment (D) for the floating material, the separation compartment (D) being in open communication with the upper subcompartment (B) of the collection compartment (A), and

a valve (16/13B) which is provided at the top of the separation compartment (D) and when in an open position connects the separation compartment (D) with the upper subcompartment (B) of the collection compartment (A).

21. (New) Apparatus according to claim 20, characterised in that the valve includes an annular valve member (16) which is disposed around the upper subcompartment

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(B) of the collection compartment and in the closed position of the valve is in sealing engagement with an annular valve seat (13B) on the inner wall.